1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

children, three of whom are now dead. They died of fevers and smallpox. I was married a second time and this wife has had but one child—the boy who is now going to school.

People around here count me one of the rich and well-to-do farmers of Kotmi, even though I am now only 35 years of age. I am now engaged in a controversy over a piece of land and the *panch* has not been able to settle it to my satisfaction. I have threatened to take the matter to court and I hope the *panch* will do the right thing.

Phaggu: A Kol who Returned to the Old Paths[1]

My father was born in Barela and he held a few acres of land and farmed them and gained sufficient wealth to make us independent. He had nine children, five of them were boys and four were girls. Two of the sisters are now living, while two are dead. The time came when my father could not profitably farm his land so a Mohammedan of influence bought the field and father worked for him in the same field for forty or forty-five years. My elder brother is working as a factory coolie in Jubbulpore and I work as a coolie in Barela.

I too was born here in Barela. My father died when I was about thirty years of age. I did not get any share of my father's property, for when he died I was not at home but in Nagpur. I lived at home with my father for eighteen years and was then married. I started to school, but could not continue to study because the school master used to punish his students very much and once when he tried to punish me I tripped him up and he fell and hurt his head. I was then in the first Hindi. This was during the great famine.

By the grace of Narayan we did not die of hunger during this awful famine, for we had enough to eat, especially those first eighteen years when I never thought of hard work such as coolie work. When I was eighteen I took a rupee from father and set off for Nagpur and travelled without a ticket all the day. I would get off the train at every station and as the train started I used to get in another compartment. Thus I reached Balaghat and got a job in the Manganese mines where I worked for about ten years. I could not earn anything there except enough to feed me:

Jahan jao bhag,
Wahan lage Ag.
Age Age sab Sanichar ja raha hai
Tu kahan ja raha hai?

1. See Frontispiece and plate XXVII.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

159 certificate examination. And my disease increased so much that it seemed that I was useless to the life of the world. Ever since the time the dog bit me I was put to sorrow, trouble and all sorts of miseries. And up until now I could not get rid of my troubles and my disease is increasing and it seems that sooner or later it will cause my death. At the present time I am much disappointed in life. This world has become meaningless to me and everything seems to come to nothingness. At this time I seem to be absolutely unworthy of either heaven or hell. I pray that Bhagawan may never give such a mournful life to another.

With all these troubles and miseries of life I continued to study very labouriously. At least my classmates and teachers know of my hard study, or at least Bhagawan knows the heart of men and no one else. Fate! Thou art Wonderful!

HARLAL: A KOL STRUGGLING WITH THE NEW ORDER[1]

I was born in the month of *Srawan* (July-August), 1909 in the village of Burgi which is about 18 miles from Jubbulpore. My father was a railway worker and had a responsible position in the station at [465] Burgi where he got Rs. 30/- per month which was later increased to Rs. 40/-. My grandfather came from our country Rewa, but both my father and I were born in Burgi. As time went on my father had trouble with the railway authorities and could not bear their ill treatment. In addition to this he was not granted leave when he wanted to attend marriages or festivals, so he finally resigned and came to live with an uncle who was living in Barela. I was the first born child and was about seven years old when we came to live in Barela.

At present we are two children: my sister and myself. My sister was born after we came to Barela. When my father retired from the railway and came to Burgi he had a lot of money, but at that [273] time he was in the habit of drinking and it was all wasted in that way. Somehow, after it was all gone, he came to his senses and with the help of the *panch* and their influence he gave it up. With the little money that was left he made me learn the work of a carpenter and bought me [335] about sixty rupees worth of tools which helped me get started. Through the help of those tools I was able to earn a daily wage and live nicely. I can make tables, chairs, and most anything that an ordinary carpenter can make.

● [876] As regards my education my father sent me to school, and I went for only a few days. Unfortunately the teacher began to punish me

1 See plate XXVII.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

from the very first day and for two or three days he continued it, and so I thought that if this is all I am going to get in school every day then I had better stop, so I ran away from school. When my father discovered that I was not going he was very angry, and tried to compel me to go to school, but I ran away to Jubbulpore where I met another Kol who knew me and the family well and he cared for me for two days, and then brought me back to Barela. At this time I was about ten years of age. My father again and again advised me to go to school, but I never went again. Since that time I have regretted this very much, especially when I see some of my classmates (not Kols) who began their education along with me, and are now teachers in the same school in Barela. When they see me working as a coolie they laugh at my condition, but what can I do except put my head down in shame, for it was my own fault that I stayed away from school. I am able to read and write just a bit, but this is nothing compared to the education they have received. I really repent very much and curse my luck and fate.

When my father finally saw that I was not going to school and had no liking for it, he asked me to learn some trade and so I began to work along with him. Once he got angry with me during the working hours because I did not do just as he told me to do, and he punished me before other people ; and as this made me angry, I ran away from home again, and on leaving I stole Rs. 22/- from my father and went straight to Narsinghpur (about fifty miles from Jubbulpore). I reached the station in the evening and got down from the train and wanted to stop in a *dharmasala* for the night, but the railway porters would not let me out of the station premises without a ticket, for I had none, and for fear that the money I had would be snatched away from me by a ticket-collector or a thief I had it in my private parts. As I could get no place in Narsinghpur I went straight on to Itarsi (about 100 miles further) without a ticket.

I stayed a month in Itarsi searching for work, but could not find a thing to do and there were not many Kols there. I knew I must go back to Jubbulpore as I had only Rs. 10/- left and it would soon be gone and I would be far from help. So I returned to Jubbulpore and searched for work. Fortunately I got work as a *panka* puller in a bungalow for the period of five months and received Rs. 12/- a month. To my great surprise I learned that my father had reported my absence to the police station in Barela and before long some of the police in Jubbulpore caught me and taking me to the police station began to ask me about my parents and the reason I left home. I told them everything and later they sent me with a policeman back to Barela